

MARINE SCIENCE

AMSA

2021

IN THE ANTHROPOCENE



EventsAIR Success Stories



“EventsAIR gave us the opportunity of not only having a great platform, but providing our operations team with the training and support to actually make sure that we could utilise that platform to the best advantage. The result has been that we have had more event enquiries and more opportunities to do international events than we’ve ever had before.”

Julie McGraw, Managing Director, GEMS Event Management Australia

Case Study for

Introduction

Sydney-based conference and business event organizer, GEMS Event Management Australia, has built a stellar reputation for its work with associations and government clients over the past 30 years. One of the recent events GEMS managed was the Australian Marine Sciences Association National Conference, originally slated for a July 2020 delivery, but postponed to June 2021 on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Challenge

GEMS Managing Director, Julie McGraw, said the challenges began early on when, due to an in-person venue complication, the event had to be transitioned to a fully virtual program. Though concurrent presenter numbers dropped from around 340 to approximately 250 with the move to online, the logistics of delivering this number of live presenters virtually proved too difficult, so the team sought to find a solution.

“The event typically, when held face to face, would have a 12-minute presentation followed by a 3-minute Q&A, and

that was the process that the client ideally wanted to have. However, it wasn’t practical to do that, so we decided that the best way to do this event and to make it run seamlessly was to do 250 pre-records, which is what we did,” said Ms McGraw.

The Process

The GEMS team spent the seven weeks prior to the conference conducting rehearsals, pre-recording presentations, cutting videos, helping presenters get familiar and comfortable with the technology, and writing running sheets. Using the OnAIR virtual platform, GEMS was able to run blocks of six presentations back-to-back, followed by 20-minute Q&A sessions with the six presenters from that block, over the duration of the four-day conference.

“All in all, it was a massive challenge, but it actually went seamlessly. The amazing level of support we’ve received after the event — the feedback we got from people that had not necessarily had good experiences with virtual events prior to this — was overwhelming,” said Ms McGraw.

“I know that, for sure, we could not have done this if we didn’t have this particular software platform.”

OnAIR in Action

Ms McGraw noted that while there was some initial hesitancy from delegates and presenters around using the technology and the event's virtually delivery, apprehension was soon replaced by distinctly positive feedback.

3D Mode Put Delegates At Ease

"This was the first time we had used 3D mode and that made a massive difference to the client. The look and feel made people much more comfortable interacting with the platform. It looked like they were really going into an auditorium," said Ms McGraw.

"There were a number of comments from sponsors and exhibitors that they felt so much more comfortable than previous events that they'd done, and they would look at actually being involved in virtual events in the future, which was wonderful given we'd had a lot of trouble actually converting some of them across to the idea of going virtual."

Breakout Rooms and Gamification Facilitated Engagement

Ms McGraw said many OnAIR features impressed not just her team and the client, but the conference delegates as well.

"We used meeting hubs, we did a virtual trivia night using breakout rooms, we used gamification — we pretty much used every facility in the portal that we possibly could," said Ms McGraw.

"There were a lot of people who loved the gamification feature — it was amazing how competitive scientists can be!"

AIRCast Studio is a PCO's Best Friend

Ms McGraw said in her opinion, several OnAIR features were standout.

"Probably the best aspect of this particular piece of software from my perspective, in relation to this job, was the delegates ability to go back and view presentations after the event," said Ms. McGraw.

"By far my favourite part of OnAIR is AIRCast Studio. It is so much fun to be able to be that voice behind the scenes to help our speakers be comfortable before they go on. To have control over someone freezing or someone dropping out or being able to swap them out of the view. To not have to stand in the back of a room and agonize when a presenter has technology issues — because with AIRCast Studio, we can do something about that," said Ms McGraw.

The EventsAIR Team Saved the Day

"For the last 2 years since COVID, we have been totally supported by all of the team at EventsAIR and to be honest, in my business, being a conference organiser for hire, if it hadn't been for the software provided to us by EventsAIR, I have no doubt that my business doors would be closed," said Ms McGraw.



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